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07 Moses Begins His Ministry

Death of Joseph

Genesis 50. [22] Now Joseph stayed in Egypt, he and his father's household, and Joseph lived one hundred and ten years. [23] Joseph saw the third generation of Ephraim's sons; also, the sons of Machir, the son of Manasseh, were born on Joseph's knees. [24] Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die, but God will surely take care of you and bring you up from this land to the land which He promised on oath to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob." [25] Then Joseph made the sons of Israel swear, saying, "God will surely take care of you, and you shall carry my bones up from here." [26] So Joseph died at the age of one hundred and ten years; and he was embalmed and placed in a coffin in Egypt.

The writer of Hebrews even talked about this with respect to Joseph's faith. "**Hebrews 11:22** *It was by faith that Joseph, when he was about to die, said confidently that the people of Israel would leave Egypt. He even commanded them to take his bones with them when they left.* (NLT)

After the terrible wrongs done to him by his brothers, Joseph offered forgiveness, saying to his brothers, , "You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good. He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people." (Genesis 50:20 NLT)

Exodus 1 - New American Standard Bible 1995

Israel Multiplies in Egypt

1 Now these are the names of the sons of Israel who came to Egypt with Jacob; they
came each one with his household: [2] Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah; [3] Issachar, Zebulun
and Benjamin; [4] Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher. [5] All the persons who came from the
loins of Jacob were seventy in number, but Joseph was already in Egypt. [6] Joseph died,
and all his brothers and all that generation. [7] But the sons of Israel were fruitful and
increased greatly, and multiplied, and became exceedingly mighty, so that the land was
filled with them.

[8] Now a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. [9] He said to his people, "Behold, the people of the sons of Israel are more and mightier than we. [10] Come, let us deal wisely with them, or else they will multiply and in the event of war, they will also join themselves to those who hate us, and fight against us and depart from the land." [11] So they appointed taskmasters over them to afflict them with hard labor. And they built for Pharaoh storage cities, Pithom and Raamses. [12] But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and the more they spread out, so that they were in dread of the sons of Israel. [13] The Egyptians compelled the sons of Israel to labor rigorously; [14] and they made their lives bitter with hard labor in mortar and bricks and at all kinds of labor in the field, all their labors which they rigorously imposed on them. (Exodus 1:1-14 NASB 1995)

So now we find that the Israelites have gone from being well thought of to being turned into slaves. Joseph had been the hero that saved not only the Israelites, but also the Egyptians and now he was just forgotten. Things got worse and worse and in time, Pharaoh issued a decree that all of the midwives were supposed to kill any Jewish boys tha twere born. The Hebrew midwives wouldn't do what they Pharaoh commanded them to do, and in Exodus 1 we read,

[15] Then the king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other was named Puah; [16] and he said, "When you are helping the Hebrew women to give birth and see them upon the birthstool, if it is a son, then you shall put him to death; but if it is a daughter, then she shall live." [17] But the midwives feared God, and did not do as the king of Egypt had commanded them, but let the boys live. [18] So the king of Egypt called for the midwives and said to them, "Why have you done this thing, and let the boys live?" [19] The midwives said to Pharaoh, "Because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women; for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife can get to them." [20] So God was good to the midwives, and the people multiplied, and became very mighty. [21] Because the midwives feared God, He established households for them. [22] Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, saying, "Every son who is born you are to cast into the Nile, and every daughter you are to keep alive."

So again, we see God's people being obedient to God rather than obeying the commandments of men. You will remember when Joseph was commanded to lie with Potiphar's wife, he would not do it, and now these Hebrew women refused to be involved in infanticide…the killing of newborn babies.

So most of us have read the story. Moses was born to a Hebrew Levite couple and the mother hid him in a small basket and placed him in the Nile River. In time, the Pharaoh's daughter came down to the river to take a bath, and she saw Moses and had

him “drawn out” of the river. That’s the meaning of “Moses”, “drawn out”. So she raised Moses in her home and he became an Egyptian in every way, except he never forgot who he was.

The text tells us that one day, he saw an Egyptian beating a couple of Hebrews, and Moses killed the Egyptian and hid his body in the sand. *“11 Now it came about in those days, when Moses had grown up, that he went out to his brethren and looked on their hard labors; and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren. 12 So he looked this way and that, and when he saw there was no one around, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. 13 He went out the next day, and behold, two Hebrews were fighting with each other; and he said to the offender, “Why are you striking your companion?” 14 But he said, “Who made you a prince or a judge over us? Are you intending to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?” Then Moses was afraid and said, “Surely the matter has become known.”*

The big problem here is not that Moses felt compassion in his heart, or maybe that he was even beginning to feel the calling that God had on his life, but the problem is that he took the matter into his own hands. We run into so much trouble when we try to take things into our own hands. He also committed a murder when he thought no one was looking. We must remember that God is a continual witness to everything we say and do.

[Chapter 2]

15 When Pharaoh heard of this matter, he tried to kill Moses. But Moses fled from the presence of Pharaoh and settled in the land of Midian, and he sat down by a well. 16 Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters; and they came to draw water and filled the troughs to water their father’s flock. 17 Then the shepherds came and drove them away, but Moses stood up and helped them and watered their flock. 18 When they came to Reuel their father, he said, “Why have you come back so soon today?” 19 So they said, “An Egyptian delivered us from the hand of the shepherds, and what is more, he even drew the water for us and watered the flock.” 20 He said to his daughters, “Where is he then? Why is it that you have left the man behind? Invite him to have something to eat.” 21 Moses was willing to dwell with the man, and he gave his daughter Zipporah to Moses. 22 Then she gave birth to a son, and he named him Gershom, for he said, “I have been a sojourner in a foreign land.”

23 Now it came about in the course of those many days that the king of Egypt died. And the sons of Israel sighed because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry for help because of their bondage rose up to God. 24 So God heard their groaning; and God

remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. [25] God saw the sons of Israel, and God took notice of them.

3 Now Moses was pasturing the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian; and he led the flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. [2] The angel of the LORD appeared to him in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, yet the bush was not consumed. [3] So Moses said, "I must turn aside now and see this marvelous sight, why the bush is not burned up." [4] When the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." [5] Then He said, "Do not come near here; remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." [6] He said also, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Then Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

[7] The LORD said, "I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and have given heed to their cry because of their taskmasters, for I am aware of their sufferings. [8] So I have come down to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite. [9] Now, behold, the cry of the sons of Israel has come to Me; furthermore, I have seen the oppression with which the Egyptians are oppressing them.

The Mission of Moses

[10] Therefore, come now, and I will send you to Pharaoh, so that you may bring My people, the sons of Israel, out of Egypt." [11] But Moses said to God, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt?" [12] And He said, "Certainly I will be with you, and this shall be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God at this mountain."

[13] Then Moses said to God, "Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I will say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you.' Now they may say to me, 'What is His name?' What shall I say to them?" [14] God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM"; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

[15] God, furthermore, said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is My name forever, and this is My memorial-name to all generations.

1 Moses felt called of God, but he felt inadequate. If God calls you to something, God will get you through it. I often say, "God doesn't always call the 'equipped', but He does equip the called."
2 Moses tried to "help God out" by killing the Egyptian. He would have to put his calling on hold until he was finally 80 years old to enter ministry God's way.
3 This is the first time that God revealed His Name and His identity to human beings. Note that God revealed Himself at Mt Horeb which we believe was Sinai. So, God revealed Himself to Moses in the same place where He would eventually give His people the Law (Torah).
4 Protestant theologians lose something in just saying this is "I am that I am".
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